

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 20, 1997**

PROJECT REVIEWED

State Route 519 Intermodal Access Project

Convened: 9:00 AM

CITY UPDATES

Department of Construction & Land Use  
1997-98 Parks Major Maintenance  
Executive Services

WORKING DISCUSSIONS

West Lake Union Workshop

Adjourned: 5:30 PM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Barbara Swift, Chair  
Moe Batra  
Carolyn Darwish  
Gail Dubrow  
Robert Foley  
Gerald Hansmire  
Rick Sundberg

STAFF PRESENT

Marcia Wagoner  
Vanessa Murdock  
Michael Read

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**CONSTRUCTION AND LAND USE**

Discussion

Judith Noble, Construction and Land Use

Time: 0.5 hour (N/C)

Judith Noble briefed the Commission on her role as the Finance and Administrative Services Division Director in the Department of Construction and Land Use. Noble expressed interest in the Neighborhood and Commercial Design Review program, currently being evaluated by the Design Commission, and the work of the Design Commission. Commission members discussed their 1997 goals with Noble, among those taking a proactive step in the review of Capitol Projects, and communicating the value added of good design to the public benefit.

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**MUNICIPAL CENTER PLANNING**

Discussion

Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Commissioner Hansmire updated the Commission on the recent presentation made to the Joint Design and Planning Commission working session on the alternative locations for the Municipal Courts. Commissioners suggested convening a small discussion group on the Dexter Horton lobby conversion option to include interested parties in the historic preservation and urban design communities.

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**1997 PARKS MAJOR MAINTENANCE PROGRAM**

Update

Tim Motzer, Department of Park and Recreation

Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Tim Motzer highlighted upcoming Major Maintenance projects that might be of interest to the Design Commission. Projects in the Major Maintenance program are primarily renovation projects, but occasionally involve changes. Among those projects noted for future Commission review follow: The Last Open Space in Lake City, Minor Play Area Improvements, Magnolia Pool, Rainier Community Center Play Area Development, Aquarium Sound to Mountain Exhibit, Hiawatha Community Center, Volunteer Park Conservatory roof replacement and West Seattle Stadium improvements.

## **Discussion**

- Swift:** As you make incremental changes to a place, the focus tends to be on the changes rather than on the context. The Commission understands that play areas are program intensive, but we are concerned that the context continue to be considered and treated with respect.
- Wagoner:** The Commission could be of assistance during your play area policy discussions.
- Foley:** Regarding the Sounds to Mountain exhibit at the Aquarium, is it prudent to spend funds on a facility that will undergo renovation? Wouldn't it be wiser to wait until the Aquarium Master Plan is in place?
- Motzer:** Most of the funding for the project was generated by the Aquarium. They feel that it is essential to boost their visitor volume, and they understand this exhibit would be a short term solution.
- Swift:** I would assume that many exhibits are designed for a life span of 5 to 10 years in one location.
- Dubrow:** I can understand the need to generate some public support on the part of the Aquarium. What is their strategy, other than this exhibit, for doing so?
- Motzer:** An update of this exhibit has been in the works for awhile. I think the drop in number of visitors was the straw that broke the donkey's back.
- Hansmire:** From what I remember of the Master Plan, the exhibit area would not be impacted until later in the renovation/expansion.
- Wagoner:** I think the Commission would be interested in the results of some of the planning studies you mentioned.
- Swift:** . . . including a report on the City reforestation strategy. If we could be briefed on the studies before they are finished, our input could be more useful to you.
- Motzer:** The reforestation plan is more of an implementation plan than a planning strategy.
- Hansmire:** Our input is more useful prior to finalization, except for technical studies.
- Dubrow:** As you mentioned, we are ending a major building cycle. It would be in the best interests of the City to use this gap in building activity to address design standards that will guide the next cycle of construction, which I would assume will include a number of public/private partnerships.
- Darwish:** Some neighborhoods feel they don't have the same quality of design as other neighborhoods. How are the resources allocated? Is there a mechanism in place to ensure equal distribution of resources in a manner that results in a high level of design and material quality across the City?
- Motzer:** The condition of the facility drives our allocation of resources. Regarding the level of quality, we have Department standards that we must follow for all projects.
- Dubrow:** What level of urban design expertise do you have in-house that allows you to do in-house projects?
- Motzer:** We have three landscape architects, two architects and a mechanical engineer who design and review projects. We have divided the city into three districts, each landscape architect has been assigned to one of the districts. For the most part we are not trying to do building design in-house. Given the decline in funding, we have to rely on outside consultants. In terms of planning and programming,

however, we are not as strong. Our planners are tied to Capitol projects. When we don't have Capitol projects, we don't have planners.

**Darwish:** Who will be heading up the policy discussion on play areas?

**Motzer:** We have a set of play area standards in the Department. Our designers on staff adhere to those standards but tend to focus on individual projects rather than the big picture.

**Wagoner:** It is unfortunate that there is no funding for planning in the Department. As the Commission often looks at the bigger picture, we could be of assistance to you in your policy discussions.

As neighborhoods develop their neighborhood plans, who in the Department of Parks and Recreation will be looking at the Department facilities citywide.

**Motzer:** Woody Wilkenson is in charge of the planning group.

**Dubrow:** What are the set of principles or priorities that shape the decisions about any one of these projects?

**Motzer:** Our customers are the three geographically defined districts, plus the Zoo and the Aquarium. Each district director earmarks the important facilities in their district so none of the facilities get left out.

**Dubrow:** Do you feel that the division of the City into three districts has resulted in an equitable distribution of the product; the real customers being the public rather than the district Park managers?

**Motzer:** The concept behind the district managers was that they would be in close contact with the public, and thus represent the interests of that public.

**Wagoner:** There have been past efforts to look at how the various communities in the City have been served.

**Motzer:** In terms of funding, we are shifting away from the big picture.

**Sundberg:** You need to look at both the big and little picture.

**Batra:** Where does the money collected from the Sand Point moorage go? Is it invested back into the park, or placed into a larger fund?

**Motzer:** I can't say for sure; sometimes those moneys would go into the general fund, sometimes they would go back into the park.

**ACTION:** No action , briefing only.

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#### COMMISSION BUSINESS

A. MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 6, 1997 Approved as amended.

B. CONSULTANT SELECTION REPORTS: LINCOLN RESERVOIR, SEATTLE CENTER OPERA HOUSE AND MAGNOLIA POOL. Batra reported that the statements of qualifications for the Lincoln Reservoir were due on February 19<sup>th</sup>. Sundberg

reported that a short list for the Seattle Center Opera House was submitted on February 16. Swift reported that the Miller|Hull Partnership was awarded the contract for the Magnolia Pool.

- C. AQUARIUM "MOUNTAINS TO SOUND" EXHIBIT CONSULTANT SELECTION Darwish will serve.
- D. SAND POINT Hansmire will serve on the Advisory Committee. A Sitewide Design Guidelines Workshop will be held on March 8<sup>th</sup>.
- E. WATERSHED ACTION GRANTS Information on the 1997 Watershed Action Grants from the King County Department of Natural Resources was distributed to the Commissioners.
- F. CULTURAL RESOURCES ELEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Three upcoming workshops were announced on the development of the Cultural Resources element of the Comprehensive Plan: 2/24 in the Community Room of the Pearl Warren Building at 606 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. S; 2/26 in the Seattle City Light North Auditorium at 1300 N 97<sup>th</sup> St. and 2/27 at Camp Long, 5200 35<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW. All meetings will begin with a half hour open house at 6:30 PM, followed by a two hour workshop.
- G. LETTER A draft Letter to Beverly Barnett regarding the Convention Center Street Vacations was reviewed by the Commission.

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022097.5      Project: **STATE ROUTE 519 INTERMODAL ACCESS**  
                  Phase: Briefing  
                          Mark Clemmens, SeaTrans  
                          Lester Rubstello, Washington Department of Transportation  
                          Steve Pearce, Office of Management and Planning  
                  Time: 1 hour (N/C)

State Route 519 in Seattle connects the western terminus of I-90 with the Seattle waterfront, including port terminals, Washington State Ferries's Coleman Dock terminal and the tourist oriented businesses. Conflicting with SR 519 is a two-track Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad (BNSF) mainline carrying freight to and fro from the midwest that serves the region's passenger rail service, of both Amtrack and the Regional Transit Authority. In 1996, train activity on the BNSF mainline blocked traffic on SR 519 for 3.5 hours out of 24. It is projected that by 2010 the blockage time will increase to 5 hours of every 24. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), King County, the City of Seattle, the Port of Seattle, the baseball stadium Public Facilities District and BNSF have joined in an informal partnership to

find some solutions to the congestion problems. Ideas have centered on grade separation of SR519 with the BNSF mainline, improved pedestrian connections to the stadium(s), avoidance of the Alaskan Way switching track, and overall congestion reduction.

Three alternatives were considered: to bring the freeway into an elevated intersection, to connect the 4<sup>th</sup> St. viaduct at Airport Way alongside the Kingdome to Royal Brougham, and to build two overpasses, one at 4<sup>th</sup> St. and another at 1<sup>st</sup> St. The later, called the one-way couplet alternative, is the preferred alternative for reasons of funding, feasibility and ability to accommodate potential significant changes in the area. In addition to the two one-way bridges over the mainline, the preferred alternative calls for 2 pedestrian/railroad grade separation structures, one to be located between King St. Station and 4<sup>th</sup> St., the other to be located along S Royal Brougham Way extending from the NE corner of the new baseball stadium to just east of 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.

### **Discussion**

- Dubrow:** Is there any chance of dropping the rail lines under the traffic?
- Rubstello:** It is very problematic. For one thing, the water table is at 7 or 8 feet.
- Swift:** Will bike us be accommodated?
- Clemmens:** Yes, there will be a bike shoulder of five feet.
- Dubrow:** Have you given any thought to what design processes might generate some less generic pedestrian connections?
- Rubstello:** Members of our team have been in contact with the stadium design team at NBBJ.
- Dubrow:** Fine tuning would be in your best interests, as well as that of the stadium.
- Darwish:** How will people with disabilities use the pedestrian overpasses?
- Clemmens:** They will be in full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Swift:** I would like to commend you an extremely clear and cogent presentation.
- Foley:** Was there ever a scenario either warranting a connection to the viaduct with ramps, or having an elevated street along the water?
- Pearce:** Our Federal funding requires us to touch down (at 4<sup>th</sup> St.) as soon as possible.
- Foley:** I really appreciate seeing the stadium drawing in the context of this presentation. I never realized that the structure will be 2 blocks in mass and 20 stories high.
- Hansmire:** You can see why ballparks such as Denver's are considered so community-friendly, they are relatively low.  
Is there any way to make the bridge structures in the same architectural family as the ballpark?
- Rubstello:** BNSF wants the overpass to be enclosed to prevent objects being thrown onto the tracks. We may pull some of the steel from the stadium into the overpass structures.
- Hansmire:** I think there is a lot that could be done with the colors and cladding. The City and State have been hesitant to use lower lights, such as those that are at the Honolulu Airport. Such lights would reduce the impact of the bridge. Illuminating the handrails, instead of using overhead lights could do the same for the pedestrian bridges.

**Wagoner:** I have seen slides of a pedestrian bridge over a 12 lane freeway that uses punched metal for a screen. The screen filters the light and creates a pattern within the overpass that is quite appealing.

**Dubrow:** Is there any money in this project for art?

**Rubstello:** I don't think so.

**Wagoner:** The I-90 portal did not receive .5% for art moneys. Instead, the State wrote a grant with the assistance of the Design Commission to the State Art Commission for money.

**Dubrow:** I understand the rationale behind the mid-block location of the pedestrian overpass, but suggest that a closer positioning of the overpass to the existing street system will provide eyes on the street and some level of surveillance.

**Clemmens:** That location ties into the Union Station redevelopment plans.

**Swift:** What is your schedule?

**Rubstello:** We are in the process of finishing the environmental documentation and have secured design funding. We will try and get the construction funding passed through the legislature this session. If that happens, construction could begin in 1999.

**Johnson:** Does the delay of the stadium roof construction pose problems?

**Rubstello:** I don't think so.

**Pearce:** I would like to point out that this project is one of several in the SODO area.

**Swift:** Has a consultant been identified for the stadium area pedestrian plan?

**Pearce:** The Public Facilities District has hired NBBJ.

**ACTION:** No Action, briefing only.

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022097.6                      **WEST LAKE UNION WORKSHOP**  
Working Discussion  
Attendees: Rich Smith, SeaTrans  
Time: 1 hour (N/C)

Commissioners and staff reviewed the current draft report for content and layout.

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022097.7                      **EXECUTIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
Discussion  
Dwight Dively, Director  
Norma Miller, Facilities Division  
Time: 1.5 hour (N/C)

Director Dively briefed the Commission on the duties and responsibilities of the newly formed Executive Services Department. Commissioners presented their goals for 1997 to Dively and Miller, highlighting the benefits of early participation of the Commission in the design review of Capitol Projects. Policy initiatives with design implications in the City were discussed. The need to communicate examples of good design to policy makers and the public was identified.

**The Commission will continue to work with project managers as early as possible in the design process to provide the best quality of design for the public dollar.**